

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 577

By Herron

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Millard Fuller of  
Americus, Georgia, founder of Habitat for  
Humanity.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Millard Fuller; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fuller was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, an extremely successful entrepreneur, Millard Fuller gave of his time and money with unconditional generosity to the Christian house-building charity Habitat for Humanity, providing millions of people across the globe with housing; and

WHEREAS, born to a widower farmer in Lanett, Alabama, Mr. Fuller earned his first profit at the age of six when he sold a pig; and

WHEREAS, Millard Fuller studied law at the University of Alabama, where he formed a direct-marketing company that focused on selling cookbooks and candy to high school chapters of the Future Homemakers of America; and

WHEREAS, that business made Mr. Fuller and his business partner millionaires before they reached the age of thirty; and

WHEREAS, Millard Fuller was joined in holy matrimony with Linda Fuller while the two were still in college; he and Mrs. Fuller sold everything and devoted themselves to their Christian values and to improving the quality of life for those in need; and

WHEREAS, after giving away \$1 million, the couple teamed up with Clarence Jordan, the founder of a South Georgia interracial agricultural collective called Koinonia; in partnership

with Mr. Jordan, the Fullers developed the concept of building no-interest housing for the poor; and

WHEREAS, this initial idea grew into what is today the world-renowned organization Habitat for Humanity; and

WHEREAS, founded in 1976, Habitat for Humanity opened its first headquarters in a tiny gray frame house on Church Street in Americus, which doubled as Mr. Fuller's law office; and

WHEREAS, though Millard Fuller's entrepreneurial sense led him to become a young millionaire, he lived on a salary of only \$15,000 a year for fourteen years after giving away his fortune to found Habitat for Humanity and Mrs. Fuller worked for ten years for free; and

WHEREAS, Habitat for Humanity grew from its humble beginnings into a global organization that has built more than 300,000 houses, providing shelter to more than 1.5 million people; and

WHEREAS, Habitat for Humanity has built hundreds of houses in Tennessee, benefitting thousands of Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, preaching the "theology of the hammer," the Fullers were joined by a multitude of volunteers, including former United States Presidents, celebrities, and world leaders; and

WHEREAS, Millard Fuller's work won him numerous awards and honors, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor; and

WHEREAS, one of Habitat for Humanity's highest-profile volunteers, President Jimmy Carter, described Mr. Fuller as one of the most extraordinary people he has ever known; and

WHEREAS, for nearly thirty years, Millard Fuller traveled all over the world with Habitat for Humanity, never hesitating to hammer nails or press bricks alongside some of the poorest people in the world; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, Millard and Linda Fuller founded the Fuller Center for Housing, a fundraising group for charitable home-building efforts; and

WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Fuller planned to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary in August of 2009 with a "blitz build," constructing 100 houses across the globe; Mrs. Fuller plans to go ahead with the build, saying that her husband's desire would be that, rather than mourn his death, people would instead "put on a tool belt and build a house for people in need"; and

WHEREAS, the thankful father of four children, Mr. Fuller was deeply devoted to his family; and

WHEREAS, Millard Fuller leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and compassion in public life, conviction and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Fuller have impacted the lives of millions of individuals across the globe who have a home as a result of his personal vision and unwavering devotion and it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Millard Fuller, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Millard Fuller.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.